

BRATISLAVA BIOECONOMY CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS (17/10/2016)
"The role of regions in European Bioeconomy", Bratislava, Slovakia

Context

The challenge

Europe is urged to act on key challenges for the years to come: adapt to and mitigate climate change by limiting global warming to well below the 2°C target; ensure food- and energy- security, promote alternatives to our fossil-based economies; address the international commitments on Sustainable Development Goals, Climate Action (COP21 Paris Agreement) and the recent G7 declarations on the future of the oceans; foster economic growth and social prosperity. The Bioeconomy is a strategic part of the European Economy that is key to realise a smart, competitive and sustainable economy with a sound industrial base. Without a coherent bioeconomy policy to realise a thriving, sustainable bioeconomy that ensures sustainable biomass supply, use and recycling, it will be impossible to realise these global societal challenges. If challenges are global, solutions are local. Europe's cities & regions play a key role for the Bioeconomy deployment, using their own local resources and untapped biomass and waste as feedstock to produce greener products through new value chains and thus create growth and jobs where people live.

The Bratislava Bioeconomy conference (BBEC 2016)

The conference on the *"The role of regions in European Bioeconomy"* was organised on 17/10/2016 by the Slovak Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the National Agriculture and Food Centre and the European Commission, under the auspices of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU.

The *aim of the conference* was to discuss with national and regional stakeholders the new bioeconomy context for agriculture, forestry and fisheries, the role of research and innovation to overcome the big societal challenges ahead of us and also to identify the barriers and best practices in the regions to develop their bioeconomy strategies.

The *wider objective* is to raise awareness in EU regions, on the need for bioeconomy strategy building, giving particular emphasis to the Central and Eastern European countries.

Conference conclusions

This Bratislava Conference document brings into consideration the most important conclusions taken at the Bratislava Bioeconomy Conference BBEC2016 and builds on the conclusions of previous conferences, i.e. the Bioeconomy Investment Summit (11/2015), the Global Bioeconomy Summit in Berlin, the Stakeholders 'Manifesto for the Bioeconomy in Europe' prepared in Utrecht (4/2016) and the Lodz Declaration of Bioregions (6-7/10/2016).

The conclusions of Bratislava Bioeconomy Conference is a strategic document for the sustainable development of Bioeconomy at regional level and will contribute to the discussions at Member States' and EU regions' level on the review of European Bioeconomy Strategy as well as on future EU policies.

BRATISLAVA BIOECONOMY CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS

"The role of regions in European Bioeconomy"

Under the Slovak Presidency, Bratislava, Slovakia 17/10/2016

Europe is urged to act on key challenges for the years to come: adopt and mitigate climate change by limiting global warming to well below the 2°C target; ensure food- and energy- security, promote alternatives to our fossil-based economies; address the international commitments on Sustainable Development Goals, Climate Action (COP21 Paris Agreement) and the recent G7 declarations on the future of the oceans; foster economic growth and social prosperity. Stakeholders from EU regions, research, industry, primary producers and NGO have discussed in Bratislava possible actions to promote the deployment of sustainable Bioeconomy at regional and local level, and are proposing the following key lines for actions:

- A joint effort between the Commission, the Member States and the regions should be further enhanced to **stimulate Bioeconomy deployment at regional level**, on land, inland and marine waters.
- Proper **societal engagement, awareness, education and training schemes** should be developed, since there is no sustainable bioeconomy without the **direct involvement of civil society** in a co-construction mode, with societal appraisal of bioeconomy.
- Bioeconomy should be based on the **development of sustainable and circular Bioeconomy at regional and local level** (Bio-regions and Bio-communities) that use their local biological resources to create new value chains, local green energy, considering various elements, ranging from ecology with resilience and biodiversity, water management to cultural heritage.
- The **EU policies relevant to Bioeconomy** (including Cohesion policy and Common Agriculture Policy) should also be coherent and consider the development of regional and local "Bioeconomies" as a key element for achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Action (COP 21).
- EU Member States and regions are encouraged to develop their **national/regional Bioeconomy strategies**, in synergy with their smart specialisation strategies. Central and Eastern European economies show a huge potential that should be further exploited for the development of regional sustainable Bioeconomy ecosystems that create added value in the regions. To efficiently develop bioeconomy, the **analysis of existing potential** should be performed as soon as possible, including mapping of available biomass resources and analysis of current and prospective value chains.
- **Improved access to finance for Research and Innovation** should be enhanced, open to all funding instruments in a holistic, complementary and synergistic way (H2020, ESIF, EFSI, EIB, private funds). EU regions equipped with their European Structural and Investment Funds Funds (ESIF) may organise and support synergies with other funding streams (e.g. Horizon 2020 programme), maximising the impact on the ground and promoting "excellence". Regions are encouraged to sign Letters of Intent with the Biobased Industry Joint Undertaking and the Biobased Industry Consortium to create synergies and exchange best practice to promote investments in Bioeconomy.
- **Supportive "region-friendly" tools and framework conditions** should be further promoted, for the uptake of Bioeconomy, initiating new **cross-sectoral, cross-regional and macro-regional cooperation** schemes (e.g. Danube region), joint initiatives and projects for tackling the growing innovation gap within Europe. Integration of efforts of regions, their stakeholders, financial institutions and society is paramount to create new opportunities and jobs for green industry, farming, forestry and blue growth.
- The European Commission, Council and Parliament, with the help of National and Regional

Authorities, are urged to **update the EU Bioeconomy Strategy and Action Plan.**